



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska
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February 23, 2009

United States Attorney Joe Stecher and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)- Office of the Inspector General for Investigation (OIG) announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release:

Erica D. Spears, 37, of Macy, Nebraska, was sentenced for unlawfully converting and taking money from an Indian Tribal Organization. The Honorable Laurie Smith Camp sentenced Spears to three years of probation. She was ordered to pay restitution in the sum of \$23,000.00.

Spears was the Executive Director of the Omaha Tribal Housing Authority. During the calendar years of 2003 and 2004, the Housing Authority received almost three million dollars in federal funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Omaha Tribe exempts their Executive Director from receiving overtime pay. Spears received a salary of \$52,000 per year, yet paid herself \$75,000 by charging overtime pay. The Housing Board and the tribal council were interviewed. No records authorizing overtime or pay in excess of salary were found. Members denied any oral authorization.

Name of Defendant: Erica D. Spears

AKA:

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty): Theft from Organization Receiving Federal Funds; 10 years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both imprisonment and fine, three years supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment.

Specific Location of Alleged Crime: Macy, Nebraska

Location of Arrest: Summons issued

Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug:

Others Charged in Same Scheme:

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: On or about November 2003 and continuing thereafter

Federal Arrest Date: Appeared pursuant to summons

Date Complaint Issued:

Indictment Returned Date: May 22, 2008

Initial Appearance Date: June 13, 2008

Plea or Trial and Date(s): Pled on November 25, 2008

Sentencing Date: February 23, 2009

Next Court Hearing Type and Date: n/a

Assigned Magistrate Judge: The Honorable Thomas D. Thalken

Held without Bond, or Released from Custody: Released on a personal recognizance bond

In Continuous Custody Since:

Assigned District Court Judge: The Honorable Laurie Smith Camp

Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: MPN